



Basement Projects in One & Two Family Homes

809 N. Broadway, / Milwaukee, WI 53202-3617 / 414-286-8210

You must submit plans for any home alteration project that involves building new rooms in the basement, including bathrooms, before a building permit can be issued. The plans will be examined by a Development Center plan examiner to ensure they conform with the State of Wisconsin building code and the Milwaukee building and zoning codes. Also the SE Wisconsin Alterations and Remodeling Guidelines may be used for homes built prior to 1980.

Plan evaluation

Here are some of the items the plan examiner looks for when evaluating basement alteration plans:

- When the alteration involves a bedroom, the plan must allow for two legal exits. This is one of the most difficult issues involved in basement renovation. In order for a window to serve as a legal exit, it must be much larger and closer to the floor than the typical basement window. See the State of Wisconsin building code 21.03(5)(b) for specifics.
- Ceilings in habitable rooms and the hallway leading to those rooms must be at least 7'-0".
- Windows must be sized in proportion to the size of the room to provide adequate natural light and ventilation.

Submitting plans

Please make an *appointment* to present your plans and discuss your project with a plan examiner, by calling (414) 286-8210. During the appointment, the plan examiner will confirm that your plan meets State and local codes, or identify areas that must be changed before the building permit can be issued.

You need to bring the following materials to your appointment:

- 1) Two copies of the plans for the project.
The plans must:
 - Be drawn to scale.
 - Show the location and size of the rooms involved.
 - Show the size and location of doors, windows, ceiling heights.
 - Label how the room will be used (recreation rooms, office, bedrooms, etc.).
- 2) Cost of the project.

Fees

For information regarding fees [Click here](#).

Associated permits

A licensed electrician must obtain *electrical permits* if the project involves electrical work. If a bathroom or wet bar is installed, the homeowner or plumber must obtain *plumbing permits*.

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